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# Integration, Identity and Participation in a Changing Europe

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## Abstract

*The paper analyzes the prospects of building European identity in the changing environment of the EU enlargements. Drawing on data from Eurobarometer surveys, the study specifically looks at citizens' perceptions and images of EU and their availability to participate in European affairs. The article points out different views about the meanings and expectations regarding the EU project. Although both national and international contexts play a significant role in fostering specific representations of EU, there is no clear-cut divide between the citizens of "old" and "new" Member States (MS). Instead, one can notice a more complex picture in terms of identification with the EU. In general, people from different MS tend to feel on average more attachment to their country (and sometimes to their own village/town/city) than to the EU. Moreover, individuals from "old" MS do not necessarily have higher levels of attachment to the symbols of EU than those living in "new" MS. In addition, the level of effective knowledge on how EU actually works remains at relatively low rates throughout Europe, regardless of a country's date of accession to the EU. Consequently, the socialization effects of the European integration process seem to remain weak in terms of fostering the emergence of European identity.*

**Keywords:** Integration, Identity, Participation, Socialization, European Union

## Introduction

European identity encompasses multiple meanings and there are many ways in which this controversial concept can be defined, depending on the theoretical perspective one adopts (Bruter, 2009; Carey, 2002; Eder, 2009; Fossum, 2003; Lacroix, 2009; Quintelier & Dejaeghere, 2008). Previous research dealing with this topic points out at least two divergent strands of argument in the academic debate about European identity. The first one is based on a top-down normative approach aiming to answer the following question: *who can be considered European and who cannot?* From this perspective, the relevant and core elements of what can be defined as European identity rest both on a set of common values, principles and norms on the one hand, and a set of rights and duties basically sanctioned in the regulations regarding European citizenship, on the other hand. The second strand of argument is based on a bottom-up perspective of European identity which basically starts from an empirically testable question: *who feels European and who does not?* This approach defines European identity as a feeling of belonging, identification and attachment with Europe and particularly with EU's institutions, processes and policies. I adopt the second approach outlined above.

In this paper I shall discuss the prospects of building a European identity. More specifically, I plan to evaluate if there is a socialization effect of European integration in terms of fostering both the emergence of European identity and stimulating public participation in European affairs. The main research question explored here is whether the EU integration process has developed

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a sense of allegiance that is sufficient to sustain it as a legitimate political entity. This sense of belonging and identification with Europe is important since it points to citizens' feedback to the EU's processes and policies aimed at building a sense of European identity which could constitute the basis for citizens' participation and democratic legitimacy of the Union (Fossum, 2003; Petithomme, 2008).

The basic argument for this collective identity formation process is that Europe needs a *demos* conscious of itself (Eder, 2009), and the identity of this *demos* as a constituent of the European democratic polity can be constructed in time, through continuous exposure to EU's symbols, institutions, processes and policies. This is, in a simplified manner, the main argument put forward by the supporters of the European socialization process. The empirically testable implication of this argument is that citizens of countries with a longer EU membership time span will report both higher levels of knowledge of EU institutions and mechanisms, and more intense feelings of attachment and identification with EU's institutions and norms.

Contrary to these claims, this paper aims to point out that building European identity is not simply a matter of time. In this sense, state membership in the Union, even if it has been granted 50 years ago, seems to remain weak in terms of fostering the citizens' feelings of attachment and identification with the EU, its institutions and symbols. Therefore, integration and longer exposure to the EU's institutions and policies constitute no guarantee that: a stronger sense of belonging to the EU will emerge in the future, more attachment to its institutions and symbols will be fostered, and public participation in European affairs will increase.

The paper proceeds in four sections. First, I shall outline the socialization effect hypothesis and its main implication for European identity formation. Then, I shall proceed with a section concerning data and the methods used in this paper. Afterwards, I shall present and discuss the main findings of the study and finally, draw the conclusions of the paper.

## The Socialization Effect Hypothesis and Its Implications on European Identity Formation

Empirical research on European identity most often adopts some variants of social identity paradigm (Eder, 2009). Social identity theory was originally developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) to understand the psychological basis of intergroup discrimination. From this perspective, identity is a set of perceptions about "us" as individuals or as a group in relation to: other individuals or groups; our position in the social system(s). Consequently, building social identity refers to a process of drawing difference, of distinguishing one's social group from others (Brettell & Sargent, 2006). An individual has multiple social identities since social identity is the individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership of social groups (Hogg & Vaughan, 2002, apud. University of Twente, 2004). In other words, it is an individual-based perception of what defines the "us" associated with any *internalized group membership* (University of Twente, 2004).

Social identity theory asserts that group membership creates in-group/self-categorization and enhancement in ways that favor the in-group at the expense of the out-group. According to Eder (2009, p. 432), social identity paradigm is useful because it allows us to use existing survey data which measure the degree to which people start to be 'proud' of their 'institutions' (or at least to trust them) and 'identify' with Europe. Moreover it allows research on identification with symbolic representations of European institutions such as a flag, an anthem, a representative building, or the memory of common celebrations. Such symbols are made the object of 'knowledge' or 'identification' with Europe (Eder, 2009). However, Eder (2009) criticizes social identity theory as a paradigm for researching European identity because it inappropriately assumes that strong identifications and good knowledge of EU symbols and institutions imply strong identities. He also argues that there is a long way from identification to identity. Despite these arguments, to

which I subscribe to a certain degree, I believe this approach might be useful in revealing the weak feedback of citizens to the EU-led identity building mechanisms, which tries to reinforce its citizens' belief in the purpose of the organization.

The basic arguments of the European socialization effect hypothesis start from defining EU as an "output oriented democracy". This means that EU's legitimacy is derived mainly from its capacity to promote policies that solve complex problems at EU level (Petithomme, 2008). Conceiving EU as an output-oriented democracy is based on a well-documented observation pointed out by organizational research: all organizations tend to reinforce their members' belief in the purpose of the group. This process is broadly defined as "socialization": communication and the subsequent internalization of the group's norms and the value of the organization and its activities (Payne, 1991). Following the same logic, fostering EU's legitimacy would imply that EU as an organization would persuade its citizens that its institutions and policies are valuable and worthy of popular support. Moreover, it is believed that, in the long run, the benefits provided by the EU (for example in terms of peace, security and prosperity) and enjoyed by its citizens, would foster the emergence of a sense of belonging and identification to EU as a polity (Petithomme, 2008).

Within the European socialization approach, identity formation is conceived as a top-down multiple stage process. This means that, first, European elites would promote integration of European states into a common organization (i.e. the EU). Then, in response to the benefits of integration and to the socialization process led by EU's institutions, the citizens of EU would gradually develop a sense of European identity (Petithomme, 2008). In a simplified manner, the main idea of socialization thesis is that European integration would gradually foster European identity. The explanation of this rests on the argument that continuous exposure to EU's symbols and the continuous institutionalization of the EU's system of governance would stimulate the process of European identity formation (Bruter, 2005, apud. Petithomme, 2008). Consequently, according to this top-down approach, EU's institutions play the active role of socialization agents building European identity, while the citizens are giving feedback to the EU's institutions in this identity formation process. In this paper, I shall examine only the latter part of this identity-making process, namely the way citizens respond to the socialization efforts of EU's institutions.

The socialization effect hypothesis has significant implications which are empirically testable with the Eurobarometers' data. For instance, if the socialization effect hypothesis is correct, one should expect that data aggregated at national level would point out a continuously growing number of persons identifying with EU as they are exposed for a longer time span to the EU institutions and policies. This is what Bruter (2005, p. 38, apud. Petithomme, 2008) explicitly asserts: "the emergence of European identity in a given country is closely linked to the date of EU membership." In other words, this means that citizens of "older" MS would display a stronger sense of European identity than those of "new" MS, since the former category has been exposed to the European socialization process, on average, for a longer time span. This also implies that citizens of "old" MS hold a better knowledge of the way in which EU actually functions than individuals from the "new" MS; citizens from the "old" MS are more familiarized than citizens belonging to "new" MS with the common norms, values and symbols on which European identity could eventually be built.

## Data and Methods

In order to test the potential socialization effect of European integration, I shall compare Member States (MS) grouped according to their date of accession to the EU. More specifically, most of the comparisons are between "old" and "new" MS in terms of their citizens' knowledge, identification and attachment to the EU institutions, processes and symbols. I created a new grouping variable

of the respondents (having the values: 1. Old MS, 2. New MS) and added it to the original Eurobarometer datasets. In the group of “old” member states I included the respondents which live in countries that have acquired the EU membership status until 1995 (EU15).<sup>2</sup> In the group of “new” MS, respondents from countries of Central and Eastern Europe, along with Cyprus and Malta, were included<sup>3</sup>. The paper is based on systematic comparisons of the data available from the Eurobarometer surveys commissioned by the European Union in 2006, 2007, and 2009. In some instances where data are available, I presented different trends using a longer time span. The data were collected from all EU’s 27 member states, as well as from candidate countries (although these are not included in the analysis).

## Results

### *Information on European issues*

In order to meaningfully participate in European affairs and feel attachment to the EU project, people need to have a certain level of information about the way EU functions institutionally. This level of knowledge about EU can be analyzed on at least two dimensions: subjective and objective. The subjective level of perceived amount of information about EU political affairs is usually measured in Eurobarometer (EB) surveys by asking respondents two types of questions: one concerns the perception of respondents about their own level of information on EU and the other one concerns the respondents’ perception about the level of knowledge about European issues of people living in their own country<sup>4</sup>. The objective level of knowledge is usually measured in EB surveys by asking interviewees different quiz types of questions about EU, its institutions and procedures.

Regarding the subjective dimension, Europeans generally feel that their compatriots do not have enough information about European political affairs. For instance, in EB67<sup>5</sup> from the spring of 2007, only around 22 percent of the respondents believe that people in their country are very well or fairly well informed about European political affairs. In the same EB<sup>6</sup> survey, the perceived level of information slightly rises when interviewees are asked about their own knowledge about EU, about 30 percent of the Europeans consider that they are well informed about European political affairs. The perceived level of information about the EU’s institutions and policies seems to have remained relatively constant over time. For instance, data in EB66<sup>7</sup> report from Autumn 2006 points out that the relatively low level of subjective knowledge about EU seems to be persistent over time: about three quarters of the Europeans, questioned in different EB surveys from 2000 to 2006, declare that they know a bit or almost nothing about EU, its institutions and policies.

Figure 1 points out very small differences between old and new MS in terms of the percentages of the interviewees believing that, in their country, people are well informed about EU political

2 Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

3 Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

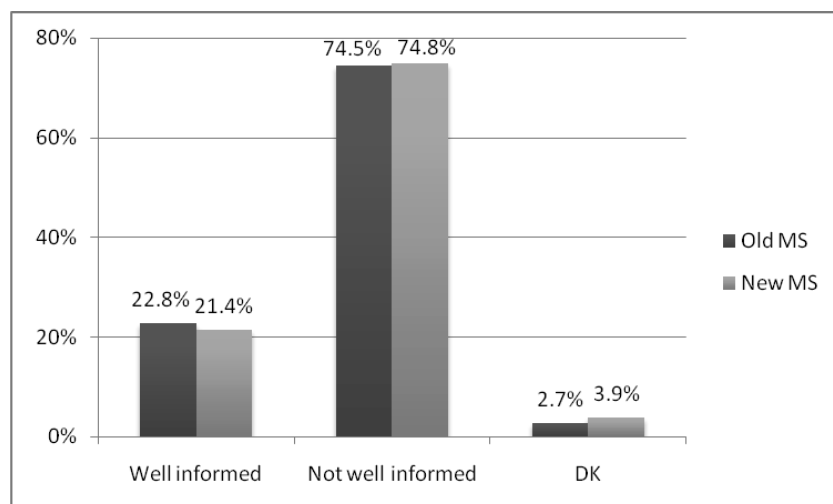
4 Usually these questions are asked in a slit ballot scheme as was the case in EB67 where half of the respondents were asked one question and the other half responded to the other question.

5 Question QA22a in EB67: “Overall, do you think that in (OUR COUNTRY), people are well informed or not about European political affairs?” p.120.

6 Question QA22b in EB67: “Overall, do you think that you are well informed or not about European political affairs?” p. 125.

7 Question QA14 in EB66.1: “Using this scale, how much do you feel you know about the European Union, its policies, its institutions”, p.147.

affairs<sup>8</sup>. This small difference between respondents from old and new MS (22.8% compared with 21.4%) is proven statistically significant by a Chi Square test of association [ $\chi^2(2) = 12.08$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ], mainly due to the large sample we use here ( $N = 13436$  valid cases). However, the effect size coefficient, Cramer's  $V = 0.03$ , indicates an extremely low association<sup>9</sup> between the variable which groups the respondents into old and new MS and the variable<sup>10</sup> concerning the perceived level of information about EU.



**Source:** own elaboration based on EB67, QA22A: “Overall, do you think that in (OUR COUNTRY), people are well informed or not about European political affairs?”

**Figure 1:** *Perceived level of information about EU political affairs in “old” and “new” Member States*

We can discern the same pattern of responses in the case of personal knowledge about EU issues. Respondents in old member states tend to report in a slightly higher proportion that they are well informed (“very well” and “well informed” categories in the original EB67 dataset)<sup>11</sup> about EU political affairs compared to interviewees in new member states (31% compared to 29.2%). While this small difference is statistically significant [ $\chi^2(4) = 76.27$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ], the effect size of the relationship remains weak, Cramer's  $V$  coefficient = 0.076, for  $N = 13280$  valid cases.

Objective knowledge about EU was measured in EB67 (Spring 2007) via a set of 3 “quiz” types of questions about: the number of MS of the Union; the way the European Parliament is elected; and the mechanism of establishing the President of the Council of the European Union<sup>12</sup>.

8 Among both group of countries, Slovenia is the only country where this opinion is shared by the majority of people interviewed (51% consider that their compatriots are well informed). This opinion is shared by 42% of interviewees in Luxembourg, 37% in Denmark, Estonia, Ireland and Malta, 35% of Latvians and 32% of Austrians and Slovaks. On the other hand, support for this opinion is far lower in Portugal (9%), Cyprus (12%), Bulgaria (14%) and Romania (15%) (EB67 full report, p. 120)

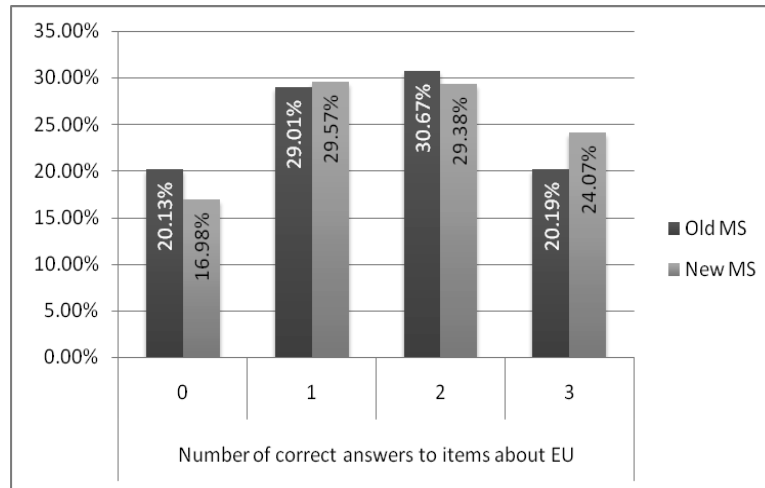
9 The effect is below 0.10 which is Cohen's (1988) criterion for a weak effect size.

10 Responses to QA22a were re-coded in this analysis from five categories (1 = „Very well informed”, 2 = „Fairly well informed”, 3 = „Not very well informed”, 4 = „Not at all informed”, 5 = „DK”) to 3 categories (1 = „Well informed”, 2 = „Not well informed”, 3 = „DK”).

11 For cross-tabulating the grouping variable of countries (old and new MS) and responses to QA22b I used the original 5 categories in EB67 (1 = „Very well informed”, 2 = „Fairly well informed”, 3 = „Not very well informed”, 4 = „Not at all informed”, 5 = „DK”).

12 QA17, EB67: “For each of the following statements about the European Union could you please tell me whether you think it is true or false? 1. The EU currently consists of fifteen Member States; 2. The members of the European Parliament are directly elected by the citizens

On average only half of the Europeans correctly evaluated the statements presented in the survey, namely 57.3% correctly answered that the number of MS is not 15, 45.4% indicated that the members of the European Parliament are directly elected by the people, 48.5% of the respondents knew that every six months a different MS took the Presidency of the Council of the EU.<sup>13</sup> Almost 80% of the Europeans correctly answered to at least 1 question, while only 20.8% correctly evaluated all 3 items in this quiz set.



Source: own elaboration based EB67, QA17

Figure 2: Objective knowledge about EU

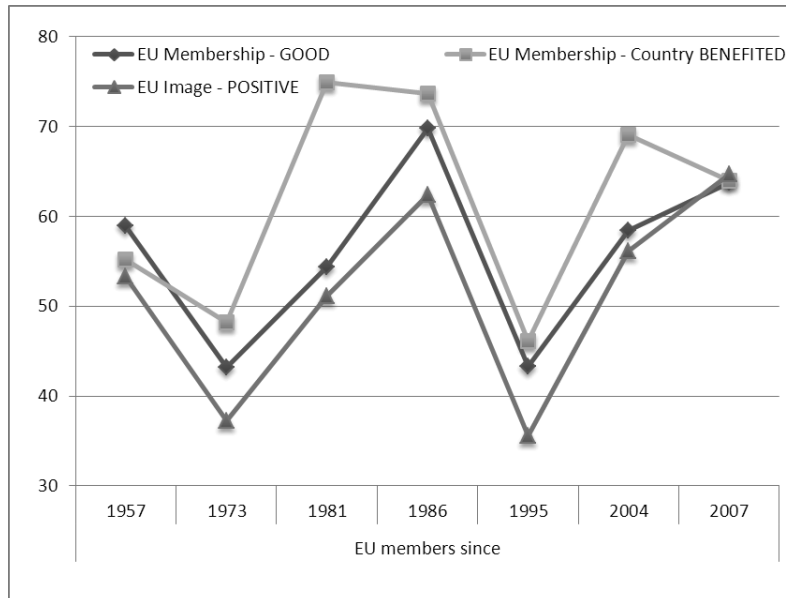
Figure 2 shows the percentage of correct answers obtained in old and new MS. We notice that percentages of the two groups are very close in the middle categories (1 and 2 correct answers), while they tend to diverge more on the extreme categories (0 and 3 correct answers). On the category of most knowledgeable Europeans (i.e. 3 correct answers), respondents from new MS outperform interviewees from old MS (24.07% compared to 20.19%). In order to test if there are statistically significant overall differences between respondents of old and new MS we have applied the Goodman and Kruskal *tau* test (the Lambda test showed the relationship insignificant,  $\lambda=0$ ,  $p=0.872$ , probably due to the higher concentration of values, around 60% of respondents, in the middle categories, 1 and 2 correct answers). Even if the Goodman and Kruskal *tau* = 0.001 is statistically significant ( $p<0.01$ ), it's very small value points out an extremely weak influence of membership "status" (old versus new MS) on the objective level of information about EU held by the respondents. If we take into consideration the average number of correct answers, we can notice again that respondents from old MS lag behind interviewees from new MS (1.51 compared to 1.61 correct answers). The difference is small but statistically significant according to *t* test [ $t(25026) = -5.513$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ]. However, according to Cohen's (1988) criteria, the effect size of membership status (old vs. new MSS) on the level of objective knowledge is practically negligible ( $r = 0.034$ , Cohen's  $d = -0.069$ ).

of the EU; 3. The members of the European Parliament will be directly elected by the citizens of the EU; 4. Every six months a different Member State becomes the President of the Council of the European Union." I excluded from my analysis the third item of this set since it was asked only to subsample of the respondents (N=1689) from new MS.

13 While this statement was correct at the moment when the EB67 survey was carried out (Spring 2007) it is no longer correct now, after the Lisbon Treaty entered into force on 1 December 2009. Treaty of Lisbon creates the function of President of the European Council elected for two and a half years, eliminating so the previous 'rotation' mechanism evaluated by the respondents of the survey used here.

### *Perception of European Union's image and membership benefits*

The image of EU (positive/negative) seems to be closely linked both to the way respondents evaluate their countries' membership to the EU (good/bad thing) and the benefits resulted from this membership. Figure 3 presents the relationships between these variables, grouping the respondents from the 27 MS according to each country's accession year to the EU.



Source: Own elaboration based on EB67: QA9A, QA10A, QA11

**Figure 3:** *Perception of EU's image and membership benefits*

The lines in this figure represent percentages of respondents in each group of countries who believe EU membership is a good thing for their country; their country benefited from EU membership; and have a positive or fairly positive image of EU. The trend is more or less similar for all three lines: the groups of countries where respondents tended to have higher/lower percentages at one variable also tend to have higher/lower percentages at the other two variables. The pattern of convergence between the three lines is best illustrated in the case of the 2007 EU accession group (Bulgaria and Romania), where the values on all three variables coalesce around 64%. On the other side, the distance between the percentages is higher in the cases of the 1981 MS (Greece) and 2004 MS group (Countries from Central and Eastern Europe plus Cyprus and Malta), where the respondents, although they believe in quite a high proportion that their country has benefited from EU membership, report in a relatively lower proportion that EU membership is a good thing and that EU has a positive image in their view. We can also notice that there is no linear trend concerning the positive image of EU (i.e. "older" MS do not necessarily have a more positive image than "newer" MS).



The graphical illustration of the relationships between the variables presented above is also confirmed by the statistical tests of association. For instance, the respondents for whom EU has a positive image<sup>14</sup> also tend to consider EU membership a good thing<sup>15</sup>, in every group of countries regardless of the year of accession to the EU (Spearman's Rho is above 0.500, and significant at  $p < 0.001$  for each of the 7 accession groups), indicating a strong correlation between the variables. As figure 3 already pointed out, there is a lower association between EU's positive image and the perception of the benefits EU membership has for respondents' country ( $\lambda$  symmetric ranges between 0.154 and 0.314, at  $p < 0.001$  for each the 7 accession groups). At the same time, there are significant differences between the groups of countries belonging to the 7 EU accession waves (Kruskal Wallis  $H(6) = 1083.477$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The highest difference in terms of positive image of EU is between the citizens of the 1973 group (Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark) and the citizens of the 2007 group (Bulgaria and Romania) (Mann Whitney  $U = 1267896$ ,  $z = -22.021$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $r = 0.33$ ).

### *Attachment and identification with EU and its symbols*

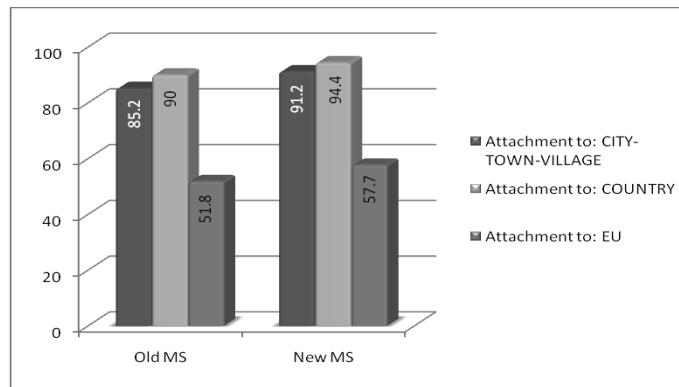
Most Europeans feel more attachment to their own country or even to their city/town/village than to European Union. The same pattern is discernable when we compare the attachment level of respondents from old and new MS (see Figure 4<sup>16</sup>). In both old and new MS, respondents tend to feel more attachment first to their own country, then to their own locality and lastly to European Union. However, the reported levels of attachment to all three entities mentioned above are slightly higher in new MS compared to the old MS (85.2% compared to 91.2% for the attachment to own city/town/village, 90% compared to 94.4% for the attachment to own country and 51.8% compared to 57.7% for the attachment to the EU). Although these differences are statistically significant, the effect size of membership status (old versus new MS) on the attachment to the European Union remains practically very low (Goodman and Kruskal  $\tau = 0.001$ , at  $p < 0.001$ ).

Mobility also seems to be related to the attachment to the EU. EB67 (2007) indicates that respondents born in a European Union country other than the country where they currently live are more likely to feel attached to the European Union (65% versus a European average of 53%). According to the full report of EB67, this observation is also held true in the case of respondents whose parents were born in a European Union country other than the one where they currently live: the same percentage of respondents in this category (65%) feel attached to the European Union. However, the effect size of both the national background of the respondents and their parents on the attachment to the EU remains very weak (Goodman and Kruskal  $\tau = 0.001$ , at  $p < 0.001$ ).

14 I recoded QA11 inverting the original values so that 1=very negative, 2= fairly negative, 3=neutral, 4=fairly positive, 5=very positive.

15 I recoded QA9A inverting the original values so that 1=Bad thing, 2=Neither good/nor bad, 3=Good thing

16 Graph bars represent percentages of those who answered they feel: 1=very attached and 2=fairly attached to each of the 3 entities represented by the variables in the legend of the graph.



Source: own elaboration based on EB66: QA33\_1, QA33\_2, QA33\_4

**Figure 4:** *Local, national and European loyalties*

According to EB67 data, almost all Europeans are familiar with the European flag (95%), believe it is a good symbol for EU (85%) and that it stands for something good (78%). However, when it comes to identify with this symbol, we can notice a diverse picture. For instance, the Dutch have, on average, similar levels of identification with the flag as individuals from Turkey which is not even a member state. In addition, old members as Germans and Italians show similar levels of identification like new members, such as Poles, Czechs and Slovaks.

While on average 54% of Europeans tend to identify themselves with the EU flag, respondents from new MS report higher levels of identification with this symbol, compared to their counterparts from old MS (55.5% compared to 53.6%). The difference is even higher if we look at the interviewees who report that they don't tend to identify with the EU flag (39.6% in old MS and 30.5% in new MS<sup>17</sup>). Chi Square test of association [ $\chi^2(2) = 394.102$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ] proves these differences to be statistically significant. However, the effect size coefficient, Cramer's  $V = 0.121$ , indicates a low association between the variable which groups the countries of respondents into old and new MS and the identification with the EU flag variable.

Identification with the EU flag is related to several variables linked to the EU's image. As one should expect, Europeans who evaluate their country's EU membership as a good thing tend to identify with the EU flag in higher proportions than those who believe EU membership is a bad thing [ $\chi^2(4) = 2725.65$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.229$ ]. Similarly, those who believe their country has benefited from EU membership identify themselves in higher proportion with the EU flag, compared to those who believe their country has not benefited from EU membership [ $\chi^2(4)^{18} = 2623.70$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.222$ ]. In the same way, those which hold a positive image of EU are more prone to identify with the EU flag [ $\chi^2(8)^{19} = 4090.04$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.279$ ]. Trust in EU is also associated with the identification with the EU flag [ $\chi^2(4)^{20} = 3972.06$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.273$ ].

17 The difference to 100% is represented by those who answered *Don't know* to this question QA43\_3 in EB67.

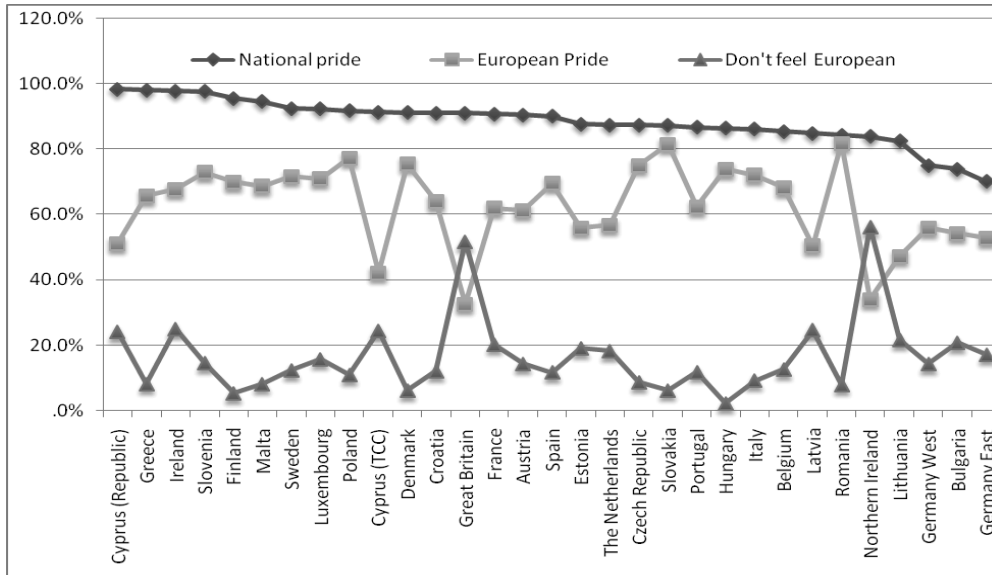
18 The "Don't Know" category was included in the statistics for the Chi Square test, although this category of responses is not included in Table 1, for space economy reasons.

19 For computing this  $\chi^2$  test, I the recoded question QA11 (1=very negative, 2= fairly negative, 3=neutral, 4=fairly positive, 5=very positive) which has been collapsed in Table 1 into 3 categories for space economy reasons.

20 For computing this  $\chi^2$  test, I used the original question QA16\_7 which also includes the "Don't Know" category which has been omitted in Table 1 due to space economy reasons.

### *National and European identities*

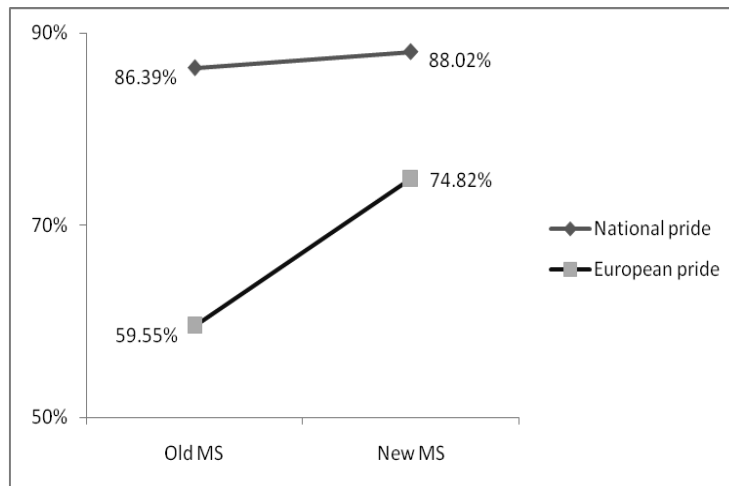
The relationship between national and European identities seems to be complex and does not necessarily follow an exclusionary pattern (i.e. either national or European). Figure 5 points out that national pride remains at higher rates than European pride for every country included in the EB 66.1 survey, carried out in autumn 2006. National and European prides display very close levels in Romania and Slovakia, whereas the difference between the two prides is the highest in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Cyprus (and also the Turkish Cypriot Community). However, there is no clearly discernable pattern of relationships at country level.



**Source:** own elaboration based on EB 66.1: QA31 and QA32. For each question I present the percentages inside the first 2 categories of answers: “1. Very proud 2. Fairly proud” of being [European]/[Nationality]. I also included the responses to “5. Don’t feel European” category of question QA32.

**Figure 5:** National and European prides

At individual level, national and European prides are positively correlated; therefore some of the respondents who exhibit higher levels of national pride also tend to have higher levels of European pride. The influence of one type of pride on the other, although statistically significant, remains relatively modest in terms of effect size (Spearman’s  $\rho = 0.238$ ,  $N = 23131$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). However, if we split the sample into two groups (respondents from old and new MS), we get a higher correlation coefficient for the new MS group (Spearman’s  $\rho = 0.351$ ,  $N = 4466$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) compared to the old MS group (Spearman’s  $\rho = 0.210$ ,  $N = 18665$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). In other words, national and European prides seem to be more closely linked for citizens of new MS (more ‘inclusive’ in terms of displaying both national and European prides in the same time) than for citizens of old MS (who are more ‘exclusive’ i.e. either national or European pride). The relationship between the two types of pride in old and new MS is graphically illustrated in Figure 6.



**Source:** Own elaboration based on EB 66.1, QA31, QA32. For each question I present the percentages inside the first 2 categories of answers: “1. Very proud; 2 Fairly proud” of being [European]/[Nationality]

**Figure 6:** National and European prides in “Old” and “New” MS

Respondents from new MS exhibit on average higher levels of both national and European prides. While the difference between the two groups in terms of national pride is small (86.4% in old MS and 88% in new MS), the difference is much larger for European pride (59.65 in old MS compared to 74.8% in new MS). The difference between the levels of national pride in old and new MS is proved statistically insignificant by a two-samples Kolmogorov-Smirnov test ( $K-S\ z = 1.096$ ,  $N = 24115$ ,  $p = 0.181$ ), while the difference of European pride is statistically significant, although the effect size of old/new MS variable on European pride is low ( $K-S\ z = 10.776$ ,  $N = 23386$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $r = 0.07$ ). The difference between national and European prides is higher inside the old MS group (86.4% compared to 59.6%) than inside the new MS group (88% compared to 74.8%).

If we combine national with European pride<sup>21</sup>, we obtain 4 categories of respondents: those who exhibit neither national, nor European pride; those with national pride only; those with European pride only; those with both national and European prides. Table 2 compares the proportions of these 4 categories of respondents in old and new MS. The percentage of respondents who exhibit both EU and national prides in new MS is higher than that in old MS (70.5% compared to 56.4%; the EU27 average is 59.5%). Conversely, ‘exclusive’ national pride is more frequent in old MS than in new MS (30% compared to 17.6%, EU 27 average is 27.3%), while the ‘exclusive’ European pride is more present in new MS (4.4% compared to 3.1%, EU 27 average is 3.4%). In old MS the percentage of the respondents with neither national, nor European pride is higher than in new MS (10.5% to 7.6%, EU27 average is 9.8%). Overall, there are statistically significant differences between respondents from old and new MS in terms of types of pride they exhibit [ $\chi^2(3) = 435.11$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Cramer’s  $V = 0.132$ ].

21 I recoded both national and European pride into dichotomous variables (No, not proud/ Yes, proud of [NATIONALITY]/[EUROPEAN]). Then, I computed a new variable (“Type of pride”) combining the recoded national and European pride variables.

**Table 1:** *Types of pride in 'Old' and 'New' MS*

Type of pride	Old MS	New MS	EU27
No pride	10,5	7,6	<b>9,8</b>
Only European pride	3,1	4,4	<b>3,4</b>
Only national pride	30,0	17,6	<b>27,3</b>
Both national and European prides	56,4	70,5	<b>59,5</b>
<b>Total</b>	100,0	100,0	<b>100,0</b>

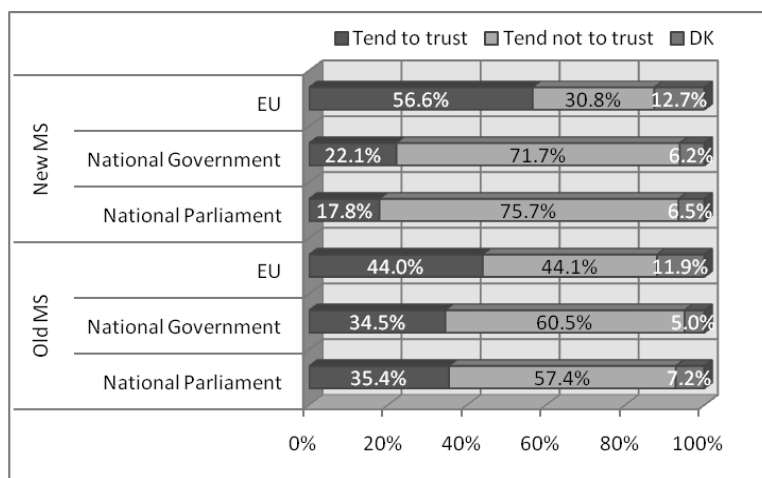
\* % on columns.

**Source:** own elaboration based on EB66.1 dataset

In terms of perceiving their identity, the majority of EU27 respondents to EB66.1 (question QA30) consider themselves to be not only national citizens, but also European ones. For instance, 16.4% of them often view themselves as national and European citizens (16.7% in old MS and 15.1% in new MS), 39.6% do so sometimes (37.9% in old MS and 45.8% in new MS) and 44% think of themselves as only national citizens (45.4% in old MS, 39.1% in new MS). Consequently, respondents from new MS tend to think of themselves as both belonging to a nation and to Europe in higher proportions than respondents in old MS. The differences discussed above are statistically significant, but the effect size is very low [ $\lambda(2) = 0.026$ ,  $p=0.005$ ].

### ***Identity, participation and the future of Europe***

Citizens in new and old MS report different levels of trust in European and national institutions (see Figure 7). On average, individuals from new MS have higher level of trust in EU than their counterparts from old MS (56.6% compared to 44%,  $\chi^2(2) = 351.06$ ,  $p<0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.114$ ). However, the situation is reverted when it comes to national political institutions. Respondents from new MS have lower levels of trust in their national Government (22.1% compared 34.5% in old MS,  $\chi^2(2) = 321.15$ ,  $p<0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.109$ ) and Parliament (17.8% compared to 35.4% in old MS,  $\chi^2(2) = 691.75$ ,  $p<0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.161$ ). Overall, Europeans tend to trust more the EU than their national political institutions regardless of their residency in old or new MS. But, as figure 7 points out, the difference in trust levels for EU compared to trust in national institutions tends to be higher in new MS. One potential explanation for the lower trust in national institutions in new MS might be the dissatisfaction with the functioning/efficiency of these institutions and also the perceived degree of corruption which is attributed to them by some of the respondents.

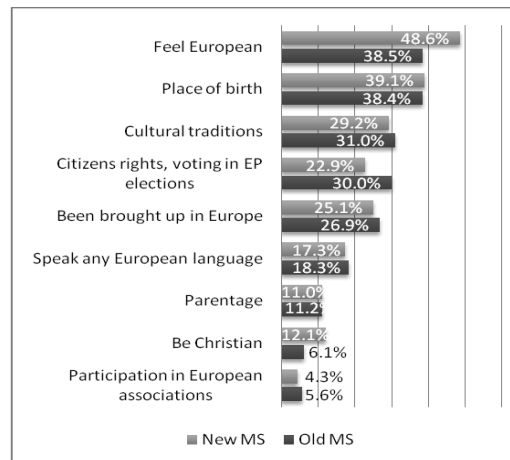


Source: personal elaboration based on EB71.3, July 2009: QA9(3,4,5)

Figure 7: Trust in EU and national institutions

Citizens from old and new MS have more or less the same conception regarding the most important characteristics of being European. Figure 9 shows that, with a few exceptions, respondents from old and new MS gave the same order of importance to the characteristics of being European listed below. Feeling European is perceived to be the most important element of European identity (48.6% in new MS, 38.5% in old MS,  $\chi^2(1) = 190.49$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\Phi = 0.08$ ). Being born in Europe and cultural traditions are also considered to be relatively important by similar percentages of respondents from new and old MS (39.1% compared to 38.4%, the difference is not significant at  $p < 0.05$ , respectively 29.2% compared to 31%, the difference is not statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$  level).

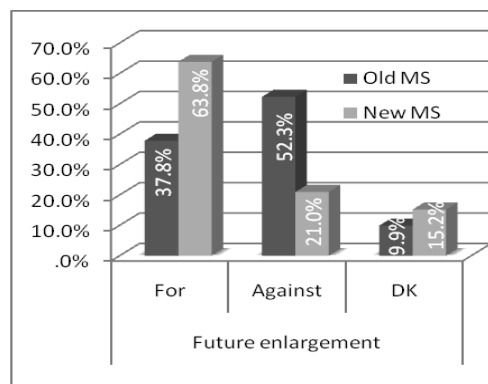
More than one in four Europeans (EU27, 28.5%) believe that to exercise citizenship rights and especially voting in European elections constitute an important characteristic of being European. On this item, respondents from old MS score higher than interviewees from new MS (30% compared to 22.9%,  $\chi^2(1) = 112.59$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\Phi = 0.065$ ). Internalizing specific EU granted rights as a core element of identity might be an important characteristic for making up a civic dimension of European identity. Conceiving identities in these terms could have important consequences for the willingness of citizens to participate in European affairs. Identification with EU in terms of civic rights and duties is believed to be one of the factors which might engage political commitment and participation (Wessels, 2005). For instance, turnout rates in the European Parliament elections of 2004 and 2009 were significantly higher in old MS than in new MS (MS10 for 2004 elections and MS12 for 2009 election). Wessels (2005) finds support for the hypothesis that low identity goes with low turnout or what he calls the *political community deficit hypothesis*. According to Wessels (2005), one of the explanations (among many others) for the lower turnout in European elections lies in the fact that the perception of EU as a political community based on civil and political rights and duties is weaker in the East than in the West. This seems to be in line with our finding that citizens in old MS, in a higher proportion than their counterparts from new MS, attribute to European identity the elements of participation and engagement, such as voting in elections, which are specific to a legitimate political community.



% of respondents choosing items as important for being European  
**Source:** Personal elaboration based on EB71.3, July 2009: multiple response set QE3 (items 1-9).

**Figure 8:** *The elements of European identity*

Regarding the future of EU, the views of citizens from old and new member states converge on most of the potential priorities of the Union in the next years (i.e. social and health issues, economic affairs, fighting crime, foreign policy, education policy, cultural policy, etc.). Nevertheless, there are also several issues on which they diverge (i.e. immigration policy, environment issues, climate change have a greater salience in old MS, while issues related to internal market, solidarity of regions, and energy issues are more salient in new MS). However, further enlargement of the EU to include new countries in the coming years is among the issues on which the greater divergence exists between citizens of old and new MS. Figure 9 points out that respondents from new MS tend to favor future enlargement of EU in a much higher proportion than interviewees from old MS. An important majority of 63.8% in new MS are for enlargement, compared to only 37.8% in old MS. On the other side, the majority of citizens in old MS are against further enlargement (52.3%), while only 21% in new MS believe that other countries should not be excepted in the Union [ $\chi^2(2) = 1792.39$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.258$ ].



**Source:** personal elaboration based on EB71.3, 2009, QA15(2)

**Figure 9:** *Further enlargement of EU*

## Conclusion

Despite being subjected to socialization processes in different national and international contexts, citizens of “old” and “new” EU member states display a certain degree of convergence in terms of conceiving and expressing their European identity. Contrary to what supporters of the European socialization effect hypothesis might claim, there is no clear-cut divide between the citizens of “old” and “new” EU member states in terms of identification with the EU. Moreover, the level of perceived and effective knowledge on how the EU actually works remains at relatively low rates, regardless of the date of accession to the EU. Despite longer exposure to EU’s institutions, individuals from “old” member states do not necessarily have higher levels of attachment to the symbols of the united Europe (i.e. flag) than those living in “new” member states. In general, there are no striking differences between citizens of old and new MS in terms of supporting EU integration, and in terms of their evaluations concerning EU’s image and benefits of their country’s membership to the Union.

Citizens from Western and Eastern parts of the Union have relatively convergent views about the priorities of the EU, displaying similar levels of optimism/pessimism concerning the future of the EU. The most striking difference concerning the future of the EU project is related to further enlargements, most of the people from new MS being in agreement with it, while a majority in old MS is against. Citizens in old and new MS share similar views on what the most important things for being European are (place of birth, cultural traditions, language, etc.). The levels of participation in EU politics are at relatively low (and decreasing) rates throughout Europe, but they are even lower in member states from Central and Eastern Europe.

People from different EU member states have a mix of multiple collective identities, which might compete but also might reinforce each other. In this mix of identities, European identity is at the moment not the dominant one, as citizens of Europe still tend to feel on average more attachment to their country (and sometimes to their own village/town/city/region) than to the European Union. Compared to European pride, national pride remains at higher levels in each EU member state, although the difference between the two types of pride is bigger in old MS. This might suggest that the narratives on which national identities are built in old MS could be more binding and more exclusive than in new MS. Comparing data on national and European prides reveals that citizens in new MS are more prone to accept and add a European layer to the national/local ones.

The relative convergence of old and new MS in terms of European identity could be interpreted both as good and bad news for evaluating the prospects of building European identity. It is good news, since convergence in the ways European identity is perceived in different member states provides a strong basis for the development of a coherent European Union, recognized as such by its citizens. On the other hand, convergence is bad news, since after decades of exposure to the institutions and policies of EU, citizens of “old” member states have not really progressed in terms of developing a sense of strong European identity. From this point of view, the socialization effects of the European integration process seem to remain weak. Without a shift in the integration paradigm, there are small chances that the EU will increase its effectiveness in terms of fostering the emergence of a European identity.



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